"My name is Christian, my surname is Catholic."
– St. Pacian

INTERDVM

"Increase our faith."
– Luke 17:5

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FIVE FLAWS FOUND

I. A BADLY TRANSLATED SENTENCE

Defect of Form

The principle of sacramental theology upon which rests our case against the validity of the "English Mass" is that of defect of form. The falsified wording in the Consecration Form, viz., "shed for...ALL MEN so that sins may be forgiven," was substituted in place of Christ's own words: "This is...My Blood...shed for you and FOR MANY unto the remission of sins." This unwarranted and unjustifiable innovation constitutes a serious defect of form of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Against our position a frequently advanced objection is the theory that in the form the first seven words only, namely, "This is the chalice of My Blood," are sufficient to consecrate validly the Precious Blood, and therefore whether or not "for all men, etc." is a mutilation, a faulty translation, or even a falsification, etc., has no bearing on the validity of the Sacrament and the Mass.

A Key Sentence

Lately several Interdum readers have inquired about a certain sentence in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which sentence appears to them to support the argument that the truncated "form," viz., This is the chalice of My Blood, is sufficient. Moreover, Father Cletus Healy, S.J., a staunch advocate of this truncated form theory, in a recent article (Twin Circle, Aug. 23, 1970) quoted this particular sentence from the Catechism--twice in this article he quoted it--to support his arguments. Thus it behooves us to take notice of this key sentence, to investigate it, and to ascertain whether or not the authors of this Catechism meant what Father Healy believes they meant.

"The Catechism notes," writes Fr. Healy, as he cites this sentence, "that 'THE FORM TO BE USED (IN THE CONSECRATION) OF THIS ELEMENT (THE WINE) EVIDENTLY CONSISTS OF THOSE WORDS WHICH SIGNIFY THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE WINE IS CHANGED INTO THE BLOOD OF OUR LORD.' But the words of consecration, 'This is the chalice of My Blood,' and these words alone, clearly 'signify that the substance of the wine is changed into the blood of our Lord.' Therefore, these words (or their equivalent), and these alone, should be recognized as sufficient for consecration." Thus Father Healy; however, I added emphasis above to this "key sentence" from the Roman Catechism, which, by the way, Fr. Healy has quoted from the version translated by John A. McHugh, O.P. and Charles J. Callan, O.P.

This sentence, as rendered above, standing alone out of its context, could appear at first glance to have the meaning attributed to it by Fr. Healy. However (a) first, the above translation is not faithful to the Latin text for this sentence, and (b) the context of this sentence in the Catechism categorically rules out Father Healy's interpretation of it.

Two Clues

If, instead of grasping at straws, they would take a close scholarly look at this particular sentence, our opponents would realize right away that something about it (as quoted above) is surely haywire. Immediately evident, without even consulting the Latin text, are two clues which reveal that the above "translation" simply cannot be correct.

The first of these clues is given in the five opening words of the sentence: "The form to be used." Setting aside momentarily the question of what is required for validity, every priest certainly knows that the form to be used is the entire form, i.e., the entire sentence of which "This is the chalice of My Blood" is only the introductory clause. Every priest knows furthermore, from Ch. V of the instruction De Defectibus in the missal and from what is held unanimously by moral theologians, that actually to use only that first clause in consecrating the Precious Blood is forbidden under the pain of mortal sin.

The second clue, the second thing about this key sentence that should have bothered our opponents, is that if their interpretation of it be correct, then the Catechism has contradicted itself outrageously. At the very outset of its discussion of the form (for the wine consecration) the Catechism most emphatically asserted that "we must FIRMLY BELIEVE" that the form "consists of" the following words: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT, THE MYSTERY OF FAITH, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS. How, then, is it pos-

sible that this very same Catechism, just a few lines later in the "key sentence" under discussion, could say or even imply that the form "EVIDENTLY consists of" something less than that entire form which, initially, it vigorously demanded "we must firmly believe" that it "consists of"?

The Latin Text

The Latin text of this disputed sentence is as follows: "Constat enim, iis verbis, quae vini substantiam in sanguinem Domini converti significant, hujus elementi formam contineri."

One need know no Latin whatsoever merely to see with his eyes that the adjective clause, "quae vini ... significant," is separated by commas from the rest of the sentence; and this point is vital. Here is an exact literal rendition of this sentence: "For it is evident (or 'evidently'), in those words, which signify that the substance of the wine is converted into the blood of our Lord, the form of this element consists." Now compare these two versions:

"The form...evidently consists of those words which signify ...blood of our Lord." (McHugh & Callan translation quoted by Father Healy).

"For evidently in those words, which signify ...blood of our Lord, the form of this element consists." (Correct and literal translation).

Quite a difference, isn't there, between saying "those words, (pause) which signify" and "those words which signify"?

Essential and Nonessential Clauses

When an adjective clause restricts the meaning of a noun or pronoun and is essential to the meaning of the sentence, it is called a restrictive or essential clause. An essential clause is not set apart from the rest of the sentence by any mark of punctuation. Examples:

(a) The player who just homered was Rose.
(b) The words which signify transubstantiation are the required form.

If an adjective clause merely adds to the meaning of the sentence but doesn't restrictively modify a noun or pronoun, it is called a nonrestrictive or nonessential clause. Nonessential clauses are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. Examples:

(a) Pete Rose, who just homered, is a switch-hitter.
(b) Those words cited earlier, which signify transubstantiation, are the required form.

In our sentence under discussion the clause, "which signify that the substance of the wine is converted into the blood of our Lord," is clearly nonessential.

Interpreting This Sentence Correctly

This sentence should be interpreted in this manner: For it is evident that the form does consist of those words ('those', as opposed to 'these', indicates a degree of remoteness), namely, all those words prescribed above, which words signify (among other things) that the substance of the wine is converted into the blood of our Lord.

Why, one may ask, did I take the liberty above to insert the words "among other things"? First, the above purports not to be a translation, but rather an explanation. Second, I justify the inclusion of this comment, "among other things," because the Catechism itself, two sentences later, does in fact go on to explain these other things. It says: "They moreover express certain admirable fruits of the blood shed in our Lord's Passion, fruits which in a most singular manner (maxime) are related to this Sacrament." From this last-cited sentence the continuity of the text is apparent: the word, "they," obviously is still referring to "those words," viz., the entire form considered as an indivisible entity.

What stands out is that throughout its whole exposition the Catechism at all times treats the form as one integral sentence, and nowhere does it even acknowledge the possibility of chopping it off after "This is the chalice of My Blood." Hence we conclude: from the grammatical structure of this disputed "key sentence" and from the overall text of the Catechism there isn't the slightest justification for Fr. Healy's claim that its meaning is that the words, This is the chalice of My Blood, "and these alone, should be recognized as sufficient for consecration." Quite the contrary! As will be shown next, the Catechism is in open opposition to Father Healy's argument.

Explanation of a Passage

We now reproduce from the Trent Catechism a lengthy excerpt, which includes our disputed sentence translated properly. The parenthetical comments are mine.

"Although in the Evangelist the words, Take and eat, precede the words (This is My Body), they evidently express the use only, not the consecration, of the matter. Wherefore, while they are not necessary to the consecration of the Sacrament, they are by all means to be pronounced by the priest, as is also the conjunction for in the consecration of the body and blood. But they are not necessary to the validity of the Sacrament ..." (Emphasis added. The fact that these words, "Take and eat" and "for", are the only words singled out as "not necessary to the validity" is in itself telling. What may be inferred? If the authors of the Catechism believed that the words following "This is the chalice of My Blood" --words, mind you, in the actual form itself-- also are not necessary for validity, surely they could not have failed to point this out somewhere in the Catechism.)

"With regard of the consecration of the wine, ... the priest...ought of necessity to be well acquainted with, and well understand its form. We must firmly believe that it consists of the following words: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY

BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT, THE MYSTERY OF FAITH, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS. ... "

(Some theologians, notably Scotus, had contended that prior to the form, as just specified, certain other words also are required; e.g., the narrative "Who the day before He suffered...," or at least the words "Take ye and eat..." On the other hand, the Greeks claimed that after the recitation of the aforesaid form there is required yet another form; to wit, the epiclesis (invocation of the Holy Ghost). To refute these opinions the following paragraph was included in the Catechism, under the heading: That this is the True Form of Consecration is Shown.)

"Truly of this form no one can doubt, if, in this place also, attention be directed to what was said before about the form of Consecration, the form associated with the element of bread. (I.e., similarly, 'Take ye and drink...' isn't part of the form for the wine.) For it is evident that in those words, which signify that the substance of the wine is converted into the blood of our Lord, the form of this element consists. Wherefore, since those words openly proclaim this, it is plain that another form (aliam formam) need not be set down. (I.e., no epiclesis is necessary.) They moreover express certain admirable fruits of the blood shed in our Lord's Passion, fruits which in a most singular manner are related to this Sacrament. One of these is access to the eternal inheritance, which has come to us by right of the new and eternal testament. Another is... etc. ... by the mystery of faith. A third is the remission of sins."

II. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE CATECHISM?

Even though we may have succeeded in proving that the Roman Catechism clearly defined "the form" for the wine to be the entire form: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD...SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS; nevertheless, our opponents will undoubtedly argue that it did not say explicitly that "the form" in its entirety is necessary for validity.

To this I reply: it need not be said explicitly, for it goes without saying. Inasmuch as "the form" was defined as such, its necessity as such is implied; for it is undeniable that the authors of this Catechism, in judging what is essential in a sacramental form, would necessarily be governed by and bound by their own general principles.

For example: in the chapter, 'On the Sacraments in General,' those authors wrote: "In our Sacraments, on the contrary, the form is so definite that any, even a casual deviation from it renders the Sacrament null" (McHugh & Callan's translation). Jeremy Donovan renders this same passage thus: "(Our Sacraments) have so definite a form of words, that if a casual deviation from it be made, the nature of the Sacrament cannot subsist." Both translations are faithful to the sense of the Latin text.

And furthermore, the failure of the Catechism to rule out as nonessential any part of the form (except for the conjunction, for, as noted above) is significant. Because, indeed, throughout the Catechism, in the treatments of the various Sacraments, whenever certain words which might be thought to be necessary are in fact not necessary, this is pointed out scrupulously.

Thus, for the Sacrament of Penance the form, I absolve thee, is prescribed; next follows an explanation that "Several prayers are moreover added, not indeed as necessary to the form..." In like manner, in the form for Baptism ("Ego te baptizo ... etc." in Latin) the Catechism diligently observes that the word "ego" is not absolutely essential, because the force of the word "I" is contained in the ending of the verb "baptizo." And again, in expounding the form for the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, the esteemed authors cite precisely several very minor variations in wording which would be permissible. Permissible only because (they are careful to note) they involve "no change in the meaning."

III. OTHER HOLES IN THE HULL

Although the aforesaid article by Fr. Healy (T. C., 8/23/70) in fact is quite short, still it contains at least five major flaws, which, like five huge holes in the hull, more than suffice to sink the ship of his line of argumentation. The first of these five flaws we have just exposed; that is, his reliance upon a faultily translated sentence in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, taken out of context, and then misinterpreted.

Authority of The Catechism

When he finds, or rather thinks he finds, a sentence in the Catechism to prove his point, Father Healy is not reluctant to quote it. It is possible, however, that he found several other things as well, for at one point in his article he endeavors to play down the Catechism. "In the first place," he says, "the authority of the Catechism is somewhat exaggerated. While the Catechism was published 'by decree of the Holy Council of Trent,' it does not enjoy the weighty authority of a conciliar document. Moreover, being a complete catechism, it treats of many things about which the Council of Trent issued no decrees -- this being one such issue."

That constitutes his second flaw. As shall be seen below, the Council of Trent-- yes, the Council itself -- in a decree did elucidate the very matter we are discussing. By the way, who has exaggerated the weight of the Roman Catechism I do not know. On pp. 109-110 of my monograph, "Questioning The Validity...," some of the outstanding credentials of the Catechism were mentioned, but it was also clearly pointed out that it is "still not the Holy See Itself speaking" (p. 110).

However, since that time when I first penned those words there has come to my attention a

salient fact, which bestows extraordinary authority upon the Catechism as regards the specific issue at hand. The sacramental forms, as they appear in the Roman Catechism, carry the weight of a conciliar decree. When laying down the forms of the Sacraments, the Catechism is speaking with the voice of the Holy See Itself.

In that the Catechism was not yet completed when the Council of Trent closed (and consequently was not published until afterwards), it is true that as a whole it does not enjoy the full weight of an ecumenical council; it is a "post-conciliar" document. But certain things in the Catechism -- to wit, the forms prescribed for the Sacraments -- do indeed enjoy such weight. Let us see that this is true.

The following is from the Decree on Reform, Sess. XXIV, Ch. VII, issued by the Council of Trent itself: "That the faithful may approach the Sacraments with greater reverence and devotion of mind, the Holy Council commands all bishops...previously to explain their efficacy and use in a manner adapted to the understanding of those who receive them ... ACCORDING TO THE FORM, ONE FOR EACH SACRAMENT, TO BE PRESCRIBED BY THE HOLY COUNCIL IN A CATECHISM, which the bishops shall have faithfully translated into the language of the people and explained to the people by all parish priests." (Emphasis added above.)

The above does not say simply that the Catechism will be prescribed; it says far more. It says that in the Catechism the forms, one for each Sacrament (singulis sacramentis), are to be those forms prescribed by the Council itself: "juxta formam a sancta Synodo in catechesi singulis sacramentis praescribendam." Who then actually prescribed these forms? Obviously the Council itself did! Now, since the forms were laid down by the Council itself -- and the Council itself in this decree assures us that this is indeed the case --, and since the Council moreover instructs us that to find these Council-prescribed forms we are to look in the Catechism, what more has to be said?

It is true, of course, that the full weight of Trent does not bolster all the explanatory material (about the forms) in this Catechism. But, whatever else in it may or may not have such weight, the prescribed forms themselves do have it. Therefore: "We must firmly believe" that the form for consecrating the wine "consists in the following words: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD ... etc. ... SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS."

One final item. Can we be certain that the forms the Council prescribed are the very same forms that ultimately appeared in the Catechism? Yes, we can, because the Council left the responsibility for the Catechism in the safest of hands. Just prior to its close, in its final session, since the Catechism was not yet finished, the Council commanded "the Fathers to whom it (the Catechism) was assigned" to give over "whatever has been done by them to the most holy Roman Pontiff, that it may by his judgment and authority be completed and made public." Hence, in most editions of the Catechism the title page bears the words, "ordered published by the Sovereign Pontiff Pius V," or similar words. Expressly ordered by an Ecumenical Council, supervised by the Fathers of the Council, published finally by the Holy Father himself : the Roman Catechism!

The Third Flaw : "Our Problem"

"Nor was the Catechism of Trent," writes Fr. Healy, "specifically addressing itself to our problem, i.e., precisely which words of Christ are absolutely necessary for consecration." And again: "While neither Trent nor the Catechism were (sic) wrestling with our problem, ...". What, I ask, is "our problem," if not the "for all men" mutilation? In point of fact, Fr. Healy himself, early in his article, singles out "our problem": "the changing of the English form from 'for you and for many' to 'for you and for all'." Being aware, as he is, wherein lies "our problem," he should likewise be aware that the Catechism did not fail to treat of it. In it we read:

"Those words which are added: 'for you and for many,' were taken partly from Matthew (for many) and partly from Luke (for you), but the Holy Church, instructed by the Spirit of God, joined them together... Rightly was this done, in order that 'for all men' might not be said, since in this instance His utterance concerned only the fruits of His Passion, which brought the fruit of salvation only to the elect."

Four centuries ago the Trent Catechism foresaw "our problem" and repudiated it!

(NOTE-- The final sentence quoted just above begins thus in the Latin: "Recte ergo factum est, ut 'pro universis' non diceretur." McHugh and Callan translate this as follows: "With reason, therefore, were the words for all not used," (which is, verbatim, the way it appears also in J. Donovan's earlier translation). But this suppresses the words "factum est" : "it was done"; and, moreover, by failing to treat properly the clause of purpose "ut...non diceretur," it deprives the statement of its full force and meaning. The passage should read: "Rightly therefore was it done, in order that 'for all men' might not be said." Clearly, what was "rightly done" was the Church's joining together the phrases 'for you' and 'for many', done for the purpose of preventing 'all men' from being said; i.e., literally, "in order that 'for all men' might not be said." As a consequence, that which the Holy Church deliberately purposed to prevent is now being done.)

The Eastern Liturgies

Father Healy: "That it could not consider the entire formula essential is evident from the fact that the Church has long approved many alternative formulae in the Eastern rite liturgies."

Perhaps our position is not clear to Father Healy. Never have we claimed that the precise

formula used in the Latin Rite, word for word and syllable by syllable, and not allowing for any possible variation whatever, is absolutely essential. In our earliest treatment of this whole subject, namely, "Questioning The Validity...," we did not fail to discuss the Eastern liturgies. Moreover, certain ancient liturgies no longer in use were also considered. In a section entitled, "Identical Wording Not Required" (p.66), we, following the principles laid down by Pope Leo XIII in his bull Apostolicae Curae, pointed out that what is required is that the forms "should always be conformed to the same definite type."

In the liturgies recognized by the Holy See, it is easily seen that all the various formulas used for consecrating the Precious Blood conform to the same definite type. In every instance:

(a) The form is a single, somewhat lengthy, integral sentence beginning with the words, This is the chalice of My Blood, or This is My Blood. These words denote transubstantiation, which is one of the things that must be signified in this Sacrament.

(b) Following these initial words are additional words; to wit, some words which express sacrifice, words which denote propitiation, and lastly, words which signify the unity of the Mystical Body, which is the res sacramenti (cf. Interdum #3).

(c) It is stated that Christ's blood "shall be shed" or "is shed," and this mention of the shedding of blood expresses sacrifice.

(d) Immediately following the initial words in (a) above, is the phrase "of the new testament," or else "of the new and eternal testament." These words express the true propitiatory nature of this Sacrifice, through the use of the phrase "NEW testament." This distinguishes the True Sacrifice from the sacrifices of the OLD Testament, viz., the blood of animals, etc., which were powerless to atone for sins. Propitiation is also denoted by these words, unto the remission of sins, (or other similar words found in every liturgy).

(e) The words: for you and for many, or else simply for many, -- but never "for all men" -- are found in every Eastern rite. These words signify the unity of the Mystical Body.

As Fr. Healy correctly acknowledged (in a subsequent Twin Circle article, 9/6/70), St. Thomas in his Summa (III, Q.78, a.3) insisted that all the words, "This is the chalice of My Blood... etc. ... unto the remission of sins," belong to "the substance" of the form. Father Healy, however, does not believe that he meant by this that all are necessary.

But such an opinion does not square with the Angelic Doctor's passage in In I Cor. XI, lect. 6: "In regard to these words which the Church uses in the consecration of the Blood, some think that not all of them are NECESSARY for the form, but the words This is the chalice of My Blood only, not the remainder which follows. ... But this does not seem suitable; for all which follows is a determination of the predicate : HENCE IT ALL PERTAINS TO THE MEANING OR SIGNIFICATION of the same statement. And because, as has often been said, IT IS BY SIGNIFYING THAT THE FORMS OF SACRAMENTS HAVE THEIR EFFECT, THE WHOLE BELONGS TO THE EFFECTING POWER OF THE FORM." (Emphasis added.)

St. Thomas certainly was aware that the form used by the Greek Church did not (and it still does not) contain the words "and eternal" nor the words "the mystery of faith". How, then, are we to understand the above passage of his? I reply that we must interpret it in precisely the same vein as was outlined in the foregoing discussion. That is to say, (a) This is...My Blood, alone by itself, does not suffice; (b) certain other words --i.e., "determinations of the predicate"--, which signify the fruits of the Passion, the graces of the Sacrament, etc., are also essential; (c) although some minor or nonsubstantial variation in wording, as occurs in other rites, is all right, nevertheless (d) the essential meaning of nothing in (a) or in (b) may be altered, lest the effecting power of the form be destroyed.

Let us not in all of this lose sight of what it is that Father Healy is trying to prove. His main plank, namely, that This is the chalice of My Blood suffices, is at odds with the very evidence he cites! For we have seen that not a single Eastern liturgy actually uses only those words; but they all use "for many" somewhere in the form. So much for the fourth flaw : the "evidence" has backfired.

A Specious Argument

"For my part," reasons Fr. Healy, "when the ordained priest has said 'This is the chalice of My Blood,' if transubstantiation has not taken place, I have no idea when it does." He continues: "If these words alone, do not contain the consecrating power to effect transubstantiation, I see nothing in the rest of the formula that would give them that power. Anyone who would say that transubstantiation has not taken place by virtue of these words would either have to abandon logic, or put himself in the theologically embarrassing position of admitting that these critical words 'This is the chalice of My Blood' are not only ineffective, but that they are, in this holy function and at this sacred moment, false! For, on this hypothesis, though the assertion has been made that it was blood, the chalice would remain a cup of wine."

This argument, which, presumably, is Father Healy's pièce de résistance, actually is a colossal dud. Though it may perhaps seem plausible enough at first glance, upon reflection it will be seen to be unsound. St. Thomas Aquinas and the Salmanticenses, not to mention numerous other renowned theologians, in fact did deny that 'This is the chalice of My Blood' (and these words alone) suffices for transubstantiating the wine into the Precious Blood. This fact itself -- this fact alone! -- indi-

cates how presumptuous is Fr. Healy's verdict that anyone who holds this view "would either have to abandon logic, or put himself in the theologically embarrassing position, etc."

As explained by St. Thomas (Summa, III, Q.78, a.3), by these words This is the chalice of My Blood "the change of the wine into blood is denoted," but this does not mean that transubstantiation actually occurs just as soon as these words have been recited. In this self-same article, moreover, (cf. Objection 2 and Reply to Obj.2), the Angelic Doctor explicitly rejects and rebuts the following theory: "But as soon as the words are spoken: 'This is My Body,' there is perfect consecration of the bread. (This much, of course, is true; i.e., at least under ordinary circumstances in which both species are being validly consecrated. -- Ed.) Therefore, as soon as these other words are uttered: This is the chalice of My Blood, there is perfect consecration of the blood..."

Sacramental forms differ from ordinary words in this vital respect: the forms not only denote but also accomplish something. But even in ordinary speech the full and correct meaning of the speaker often is not manifest until the entire sentence is completed, because words in the latter part of the statement may qualify the earlier words. For example, in the declaration "This is my precious pearl, and I now give it to you," if it be truncated after the word "pearl," what is conveyed is that the pearl is mine; whereas the true sense of the whole statement is that the pearl isn't mine anymore, but yours.

Father Healy believes that the words This is the chalice of My Blood must be instantly verified -- that is, the wine must be converted into the Precious Blood -- at the very moment the word "blood" has been said. He reasons that anyone who claims otherwise is, in effect, admitting that these words This is the chalice of My Blood are at that very instant false.

Consider the form for the Sacrament of Baptism: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This form, like the form for consecrating the wine, is a single integral sentence. All will agree that this entire form is required for a valid baptism. And yet it is evident that the first three words only, namely, I baptize thee, are the words which actually denote the baptizing. But albeit the words I baptize thee denote the act of baptizing, nevertheless the effect of the Sacrament -- to wit: the washing away of sin -- is not accomplished until such time as the entire sentence, containing necessary qualifications, is completed.

Therefore the words, "I baptize thee," alone by themselves, accomplish nothing; that is, unless the remaining words, "in the name of the Father, etc.," are also recited. Is a person baptized just as soon as the words I baptize thee have been pronounced? Of course not. Does this mean that those words are false at that moment? They are not inherently false, because they will be made true, or verified, when the entire sentence has been finished. Needless to say, if the person who is baptizing should stop with these words, I baptize thee, and fail to recite the rest of the form, then they would indeed turn out to be false. In like manner, if a priest should stop with the words, This is the chalice of My Blood, and fail to say the remaining words of the form, then those words would also turn out to be false.

--P.H.O.

VERNACULARIZATION: A "PREMEDITATED SCHEME"

All the requisites for the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice have been selected with especial care, and nothing has been adopted but what has been found best suited unto this end. This applies also to the language in which the Holy Sacrifice is celebrated; for the liturgical language should correspond to its liturgical object. The Mass considered in itself could assuredly be celebrated in any language, but by the Providence of God the Latin language has become, and still continues to be of all languages the most widely diffused for divine worship. The very ancient practice of the Church of celebrating Mass in the West, not in the living language of the country, but in a dead language, that is, in Latin, for the most part a language unintelligible to the people, has since the twelfth century to the present epoch been frequently made the subject of attack.[1] Such attacks originated principally in an heretical, schismatical, proudly national spirit hostile to the Church, or in a superficial and false enlightenment, in a shallow and arid rationalism entirely destitute of the perception and understanding of the essence and object of the Catholic liturgy, especially of the profoundly mystical sacrifice. In the attempt to suppress the Latin language of the liturgy and to replace it by the vernacular, there was a more or less premeditated scheme to undermine Catholic unity, to loosen the bond of union with Rome, to weaken the Catholic spirit, to destroy the humility and simplicity of faith. Therefore, the Apostolic See at all times most persistently and inflexibly resisted such innovations; for it is an invariable principle of the Church never to alter the ancient liturgical language, but inviolably to adhere to it, even though it be no longer the living language spoken or understood by the people. — The Church likewise, when introducing the Roman liturgy among newly converted nations, has for many centuries permitted the Latin language only. — She excommunicates all those who presume to declare the vernacular to be the necessary or the only permissible language for the liturgy; she stigmatizes as impertinent effrontery for any one to censure or combat the retention of the Latin language for divine worship. This is just; for, as St. Augustine remarks, "to question what the united Church practises as a rule is the most daring madness." In all such general decrees and usages appertaining to divine worship, the Church is directed and preserved from injurious blunders by the Holy Ghost. Instead of censuring the Church on account of her practice, that has endured more than a thousand years, of conducting her liturgical worship in a dead language, we should rather acknowledge and admire her supernatural wisdom; she counts her experiences by centuries: ours we can enumerate only by days. . . .

The use of the Latin language in nowise prevents the faithful from participating in the fruits of the Sacrifice, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary. The demand that the Mass should everywhere be celebrated in the vernacular, is based for the most part on ignorance, or on an entire misconception of the real nature and object of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The liturgy of the Holy Sacrifice contains "much that is instructive" (*magnam eruditionem* — Trident.), but instruction is by no means its principal object. The altar is not a pulpit, the Holy Mass is not primarily a doctrinal lecture or an instruction to the people. The Sacrifice is essentially a liturgical action performed by the priest for propitiating and glorifying God, as well as for the salvation of the faithful.

[1] Opponents of the Latin language of worship were, as a rule, heretics, schismatics and rationalistic Catholics; for example, the Albigensians, the so-called Reformers, the Jansenists, the Gallicans, the Josephites, the so-called German and the Old Catholics.

(The above is from pp. 319-20 and 325 of Rev. Nicholas Gihr's The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Herder's, 1929.)

EASTERN RITE FORMS

Forms used in the Eastern rites for consecrating the wine are given below. Quotations and excerpts are from Donald Attwater's "Eastern Catholic Worship," Devin-Adair Co., New York, 1945.

From pp. xi-xii: -- "And there are eight of these liturgies, as follows:

The Byzantine Liturgy, taking its name from its place of origin, Byzantium (Constantinople), and now in use in many parts of the world. Partly derived from it is--

The Armenian Liturgy, used only by the Armenians.

Two Alexandrian Liturgies:
i. The Coptic rite, used in Egypt.
ii. The Ethiopic rite, used in Abyssinia.

Two Antiochene Liturgies:
i. The Syrian rite, used in Syria, Irak and India.
ii. The Maronite rite, also used in Syria.

Two East Syrian Liturgies:
i. The Chaldean rite, used in Irak.
ii. The Malabar rite, used in India."

THE BYZANTINE LITURGY (p. 35):
"THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH IS SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

THE ARMENIAN LITURGY (pp. 58-9):
"THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH IS SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE EXPIATION AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

THE COPTIC LITURGY (p. 85):
"FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT, WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS."

THE ETHIOPIC LITURGY (p. 107):
"THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT WHICH IS SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN."

THE SYRIAN LITURGY (p. 127):
"THIS IS MY BLOOD, of the new covenant, which shall be poured out and offered for the forgiveness of the sins and eternal life of you and of many."

THE MARONITE LITURGY (p. 151)
(The form is identical to that which was always used in the Latin Rite.)

THE CHALDEAN LITURGY (pp. 175-6):
"THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW ETERNAL COVENANT, the mystery of faith, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins."

THE LITURGY OF MALABAR (p. 202):
"FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT, THE MYSTERY OF FAITH, WHICH IS SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS."

THE NUMBERS GAME

Though we should expect "rebuttals" of a more theological nature from priests and bishops, especially those with D. D., S.T.D., J. C. D., etc., following their names, yet more often than not we hear from them pearls of wisdom such as: (1) "Two thousand bishops can't be wrong!", or (2) "Over 99% of the priests in this country are actually using for all men in saying Mass."

Of course, of the approximately 2000 bishops in the world, how many had anything whatsoever to do with the English Canon? Two hundred and fifty, you say? Well, hardly. Quoth Archbishop Robert J. Dwyer, of Portland, Oregon: "The ICEL has performed its task so poorly as to raise serious questions as to its competence. Never was there the slightest consultation with the bishops of the English-speaking world; here is a signal instance of bureaucracy inflicting its will by methods which can only be described as high-handed" (Twin Circle, June 21, 1970). In a Clergy Bulletin, dated Oct. 4, 1967, Archbishop Leo Binz of St. Paul-Minneapolis gave the following testimony: "A new translation of the Canon of the Mass has been made by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy. The Holy See has withheld final approval for good and valid reasons." But this same "English Canon" was railroaded into use 18 days later (Oct. 22nd)! We don't know if 2000 bishops can be wrong, but...

If 100%, and not just 99%, of the priests in our country were using "for all men," that wouldn't prove its validity. Are such matters decided by the majority's feeling? We don't begin to wonder if the Catholic Church is the One True Church, "outside which there is no salvation," just because some 85% of all the people in the world don't feel that way. But could 85% of all mankind be wrong on such a vitally important matter?? I hope so!

At one time, according to Cardinal Newman, 80% of all the bishops of Christendom had fallen for the Arian Heresy. "The whole world groaned and found itself Arian," was the way that St. Jerome put it. The "whole world" was in deadly error!

At one time every Catholic bishop in England except one, St. John Fisher, admitted that a mere layman named Henry had more authority over the Church in that country than the Pope of Rome. How many of those bishops were right?

At one time 100% of all mankind -- that is correct, 100% of all mankind!-- was very foolishly mistaken on a certain matter. And this, mind you, was in a very enlightened period of history. Their mistake, moreover, has affected all men ever since. They thought that by eating a certain fruit they would become as gods.

What, after all, is a majority? How many does it take to make a majority? Said The Little Flower: "God and I are a majority."

M A R O N - G O - R O U N D ?

Below are some excerpts from an exchange of correspondence I had some months ago with the Most Rev. Francis M. Zayek, D.D., the Maronite Apostolic Exarch, U.S.A.

#1 (dated April 9, 1970):

Your Excellency:

In the booklet, "THE DIVINE LITURGY ACCORDING TO THE MARONITE ANTIOCHIAN RITE", published with your approval in June, 1969, the English translation of the Form for consecrating the wine contains the words: "for all men."

According to the text, "A GRAMMAR OF BIBLICAL ARAMAIC", which was published in Wiesbaden, Germany (1961), the Aramaic word which means "all", "everyone", "all men", or "all mankind", etc., is the word "kol" or some variation/combination of it, such as "kolla". If Our Lord had intended "for all men", then He undoubtedly would have used this clear and unambiguous word, "kol".

This word, "kol," is opposed in meaning to the other Aramaic word, "sagueeia", which is the word used in this place in your Maronite liturgy. According to the same Aramaic grammar text mentioned above, this word, "sagueeia," means strictly and unambiguously "many" (or "much", etc.) ...

Asking Your Excellency's blessings, etc. ...

/s/ Patrick Henry Omlor

#2 (dated April 14, 1970; Prot: #234/70):

Dear Mr. Omlor:

I thank you for your letter of April 9 and the copy of "Interdum".

I agree with you that in the actual Aramaic form of consecration, taken from the Latin Rite liturgy, the word is indeed "sagueeia" and not "kol". ...

We have to follow the existing and approved translations of the Latin Rite. -- Both forms are theologically sustainable.-- However, the words of consecration in our Rite are very rarely said in English. Most of the time they are said in Aramaic, which form has the word "sagueeia". ...

With every good wish, I remain ...

/s/ Francis M. Zayek

THE MOST REVEREND FRANCIS M. ZAYEK, D.D.
MARONITE APOSTOLIC EXARCH, U.S.A.

#3 (dated April 21, 1970):

Your Excellency:

... I am very grateful to Your Excellency for replying to me, because you have given me the exact information I want.

Your Excellency, you say in your letter: "I agree with you that in the actual Aramaic form of consecration, taken from the Latin Rite liturgy, the word is indeed 'sagueeia' and not 'kol'." In other words, if for the moment we set aside all theological considerations and all other considerations, and treat this solely form the viewpoint of the Aramaic language itself, then the correct literal translation should be "many" and not "all men". And this, of course, is also in total harmony with the Peshito, which likewise has the word "sagueeia" in the Words of Institution, as recorded by Sts. Matthew and Mark.

You go on to explain that, "We have to follow the existing and approved translations of the Latin Rite." This, of course, explains why in your Mass Booklet on the pages where the English-language version appears (opposite those pages in Aramaic containing the word, "sagueeia") we find the words "all men" instead of "many".

But let us examine the facts. The International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), who are the ones responsible for the "all men" version in the first place, made this change from "many" to "all men," giving as their sole reason the absurd claim that "all men" is correct from the linguistic standpoint! Their pretext is that Aramaic doesn't even have a word for "all", a claim which you yourself, Your Excellency, and every Maronite priest in the world knows is absolutely false. ...

Asking Your Excellency's blessings, etc. ...

/s/ Patrick Henry Omlor

(Ed. Note: The Peshito, or Peshitto, is a 5th-century Syriac version of the Bible.)

The foregoing farce may be summarized thus: (1) The Maronites have allowed "for all men" in their new Mass Booklet because (2) the "Latin Rite" --which in the present case amounts to nothing more than the ICEL-- has decided that "for all men" is correct; nevertheless (3) the Maronites know that it is not correct, at least not as a faithful translation from the Aramaic; and yet (4) the sole reason given by the ICEL for the "all men" rendering is an alleged faithfulness to the Aramaic!

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